



For Immediate Release:
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Taunton, MA...Mayor Shaunna O'Connell announced in January that errors were discovered in Fourth Quarter property tax bills sent out last December prior to the new administration taking office. This resulted in the understatement of the 2020 tax rate set in December 2019 and inaccurate Real Estate tax bills. The initial review and investigation revealed that the problem appears to have been caused by an upgrade in the software program used to classify property.

"Shortly after I came into office, we were made aware that this mistake happened last year and we have worked diligently to correct it," O'Connell said.

In consultation with the Department of Revenue and the City's legal department, it was determined correcting this error required Special Legislation to be filed. The Special Legislation passed on March 19, 2020, and a public hearing was held on Friday, April 3, 2020 to set a corrected tax rate which was then approved by the Department of Revenue.

The Residential tax rate increased \$0.28 cents per thousand and the Commercial tax rate increased \$2.46 per thousand. The tax rate increase is what should have been billed originally.

The City recently mailed the revised tax bill which is due on May 18. This bill replaces the previously mailed bill due May 1st. It is not in addition to the original May 1 bill. If your fourth quarter tax bill was paid prior to receiving the corrected bill, only the difference needs to be paid. There will be 30 days to apply for an abatement. Abatements previously granted have been applied to the new bills.

The state recently passed legislation allowing mayors to waive interest and late fees on real estate and excise taxes. The Division of Local Services issued several clarifications on the law on April 15. To provide relief for those suffering hardship due to the coronavirus public health emergency, Mayor O'Connell on June 16 issued a Declaration and Order Waiving Interest and Late Fees until June 29.

"We know some people have been hit hard financially due to the pandemic. We want to be a helping hand at city hall to ease their burden during these uncertain times," said O'Connell.

The waiver of interest and late fees for real estate taxes applies only to fourth quarter bills that are due on May 18. For excise bills, the waiver applies only to the most recent bill received by taxpayers on or after March 10. Water and Sewer bills for usage was not included in the State Legislation.

All payments must be received in the Tax Collector's Office by June 29 to qualify for the waiver of late fees and interest. Bills that remain unpaid on June 30 will accrue all fees and interest from the original due date, as directed by state statute.

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